

Plan Implementation



The writer Gertrude Stein is said to have described her native city of Oakland, California, in a manner reminiscent of modern-day SoBro. “There is,” she is said to have quipped, “no there there.” Indeed, the challenge of SoBro has always been not of remembering what it once was, or of imagining what it might become. The challenge is of actually creating a there there.

The creation of a coherent sense of place in SoBro will require a balance of private development incentive and public control, so that developers will be able to create a marketable and profitable housing product and so that the sum total of those products will create a district that is both lively and, in Kevin Lynch’s word, “imageable.” Given the complexity of current uses and ownership throughout the district, the recreation of coherent form will be an incremental process, influenced by a set of interdependent variables whose values will shift from block to block and site to site. For this reason, the establishment of a development review overlay district may be important, to channel private initiative toward a cumulatively coherent and cohesive result while providing for the inventiveness of each development proposal.

The SoBro Neighborhood Plan recommends extending Louisville’s Downtown Form District south of York Street to Kentucky; and establishing two Planned Development Districts within SoBro – for the area north of Kentucky between I-65 and Seventh Street; and for the industrial transition zone west of Seventh (also known as the SoBro “dogleg.” or “panhandle.”)

Extension of the Downtown Form District will require approval both by the Louisville Metro Planning Commission and by the Metro Council. Creation of the Planned Development Districts will each require a public process and adoption by Planning Commission and Metro Council.

Adopting and new zoning districts and devising urban design guidelines for SoBro may prove easier tasks than attracting the substantial new development envisioned by the plan. The area’s lack of identity and corresponding lack of marketability are SoBro’s “chicken-and-egg” dilemma: new development spawns new development, while the absence thereof seems self-perpetuating. Those who have long endeavored to identify “opportunity sites” within SoBro that might serve as a catalyst for new growth have been stymied by the obstacles and risks associated with developing those sites; consequently, those sites – such as the area immediately to the north of Ben Washer Park, or south from Fifth and York – have remained undeveloped, or underdeveloped, for thirty-five years or more.



To accomplish the overall vision of the SoBro neighborhood plan will require an organized entity of stakeholders who both possess and act upon a compelling vested interest in the condition and future of the area – i.e., SoBro’s various institutions, property owners, business owners, and neighborhood and resident associations, and individual residents. The current physical disarray of SoBro is reflective of a similar disorganization within the neighborhood, where there is no single entity that can speak with authority on behalf of the neighborhood general – or a single entity that can work effectively toward a consensus or focused action around any particular issue or concern.

Therefore, a primary recommendation of the SoBro Neighborhood Plan is that members of the SoBro Neighborhood Plan Task Force – as well as those other stakeholders who have played an active role in the planning process – begin immediately to organize themselves as a formal, representative body dedicated to the ongoing purposes of SoBro planning, advocacy, development, and area improvement. For help in organizing such an entity, SoBro might turn to the Downtown Development Corporation via a temporary or permanent affiliation agreement. Alternately, SoBro’s emerging leadership may wish to create an independent neighborhood organization. Regardless, it seems imperative that SoBro become better and more formally organized if the neighborhood hopes to progress toward its vision.



RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	COST	TIME-FRAME
Cornerstone 2020/LDC			
C1. Extend Downtown Form District south to Kentucky, east to I-65, west to 9th @ Cawthon.	Louisville Metro Planning Commission Downtown Development Corporation	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
C2. Establish Planned Development District (PDD) south of Broadway within newly extended Downtown Form District.	Louisville Metro Planning Commission Downtown Development Corporation	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
C3. Establish Planned Development District (PDD) within SoBro “south-west” as mixed residential/commercial/light industrial district.	Louisville Metro Planning Commission Downtown Development Corporation	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
C4. Amend the existing Planned Development District ordinance to allow the master plan option to create an area-specific use table, a specific master plan map that delineates gradations in intensity to promote compatibility, and allowances for specific transition standards.	Louisville Metro Planning Commission	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
C5. Incorporate a streetscape and open space component into the Plan Development District Master Plan for the proposed two sections of SoBro, focusing on connection and consistency throughout all of Sobro. Design guidelines of the PDDs should include a streetscape and open space component, with an emphasis on First through Sixth streets, to create an effective and attractive transition between Downtown and Old Louisville and an inviting environment for pedestrians, cyclists, residents, and businesses. The plans should also establish a neighborhood-wide system of green spaces, ranging from pocket parks to athletic facilities, for use by residents, visitors, and educational institutions and teams.	Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services Brightside Metro Parks	LMPDS staff	<2 years
Infrastructure/Capital Improvement			
I1. For SoBro “southwest,” develop a combination of public initiatives and property owner initiatives to improve the quality of green spaces, streetscapes and industrial property perimeter screening. Quality should be in keeping with the character of Old Louisville generally and will provide a transition/connection to similar future efforts in the Park Hill Corridor to the west of 9th Street.	Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services Louisville Metro Economic Development Metro Parks	LMPDS staff	1-3 years



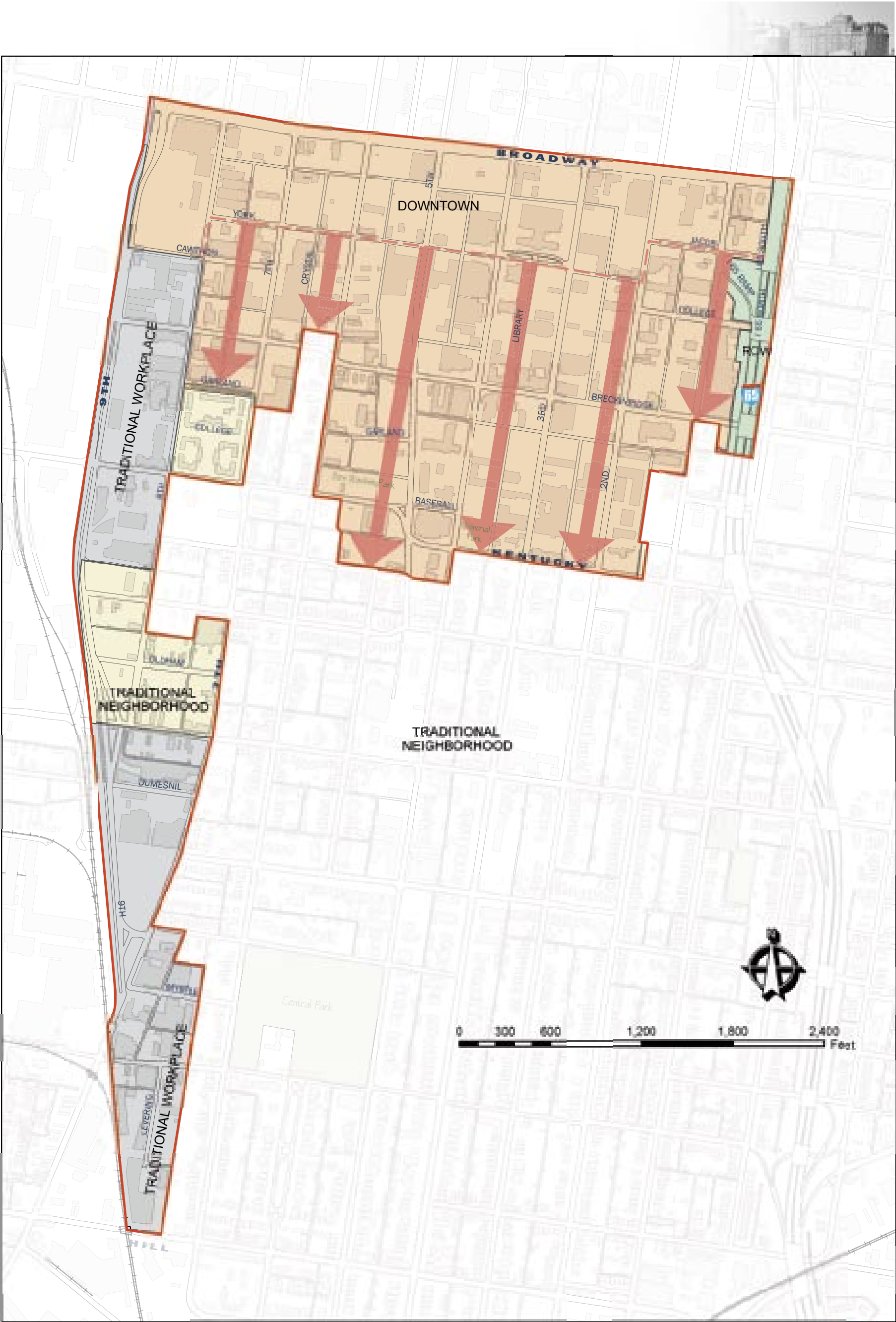
I2. Establish a SoBro Housing Development Fund to encourage new housing initiatives within SoBro, particularly focused in priority areas immediately east and west of the Fourth Street institutional core.	Downtown Development Corporation	\$ 1 million, initially	<1 year
I3. Initiate a transportation study, that would coordinate with current planning efforts in the Park Hill Corridor to the west of 9th Street, for the purpose of improving vehicular access to the many businesses in Southwest SoBro while protecting the residential areas of SoBro and Old Louisville from commercial vehicle intrusions.	Louisville Metro Economic Development Department Louisville Metro Public Works	\$ 100, 000	<1 year
Policy/Programmatic			
P1. In conjunction with recommended expansion of Downtown Form District, consider extending jurisdiction of Downtown Development Review Overlay District (DDRO) into SoBro.	Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services Downtown Development Corporation	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
P2. Organize Fourth Street institutions to investigate the feasibility of joint parking arrangements and facilities.	Parking Authority of River City (PARC) Downtown Development Corporation	DDC and PARC staff leadership, SoBro stakeholders	<1 year
P3. Study and enact restoration of two-way traffic to streets throughout SoBro (see map on page 32)	Planning & Design Services KY Transportation Cabinet Louisville Metro Public Works	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
P4. Develop a network of neighborhood bike routes that connect with the Louisville Metro Bike System	Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
P5. Focus public-private housing development strategies in the Fifth/Sixth Street corridor, from Ben Washer Park to the 800 Apartments (at 800 S. 4th St), and including publicly-owned land currently under lease by Downtown Ford	Louisville Metro Housing & Community Development Louisville Metro Housing Authority Downtown Development Corporation		



P6. Establish a single entity dedicated to SoBro planning, advocacy, development, and area improvement	SoBro “stakeholders,” including institutions, neighborhood associations, homeowners associations, businesses, property owners, residents	Voluntary leadership of SoBro task force members, plan participants, and other key SoBro stakeholders	<1 year
P7. Organize SoBro stakeholders around cooperative parking solutions, open space and streetscape master plans, the planning of joint recreational/athletic facilities, and development strategies.			
P8. Establish a Green Development Zone program where designated areas of the city would be targeted for infill and redevelopment through incentives, guidelines and technical assistance for applying green building practices. Sobro could serve as the pilot project for this program.	Louisville Metro Council Partnership for a Green City L.M. Economic Development Department		
<p>P9. Green Development Zone program should be led by Louisville Metro Government and guided by a community-at-large task force/technical advisory committee consisting of architects, landscape architects, developers, and citizens with a strong interest in sustainable building practices. This program could consist of initiatives such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop a checklist on energy-efficient design to serve architects and builders. • Advice policy makers and Metro agencies on developing programs, policy, and incentives that would help establish a Metro-wide initiative dedicated to green and sustainable building practices. Sobro could be an area which to target any pilot programs. • Advice policy makers and Metro agencies on developing programs, policy, and incentives that would help establish a Metro-wide initiative dedicated to green and sustainable building practices. Sobro could be an area which to target any pilot programs. <p>(continued on next page)</p>	Louisville Metro Council Partnership for a Green City L.M. Planning and Design Services L.M. Economic Development Department		<1 year

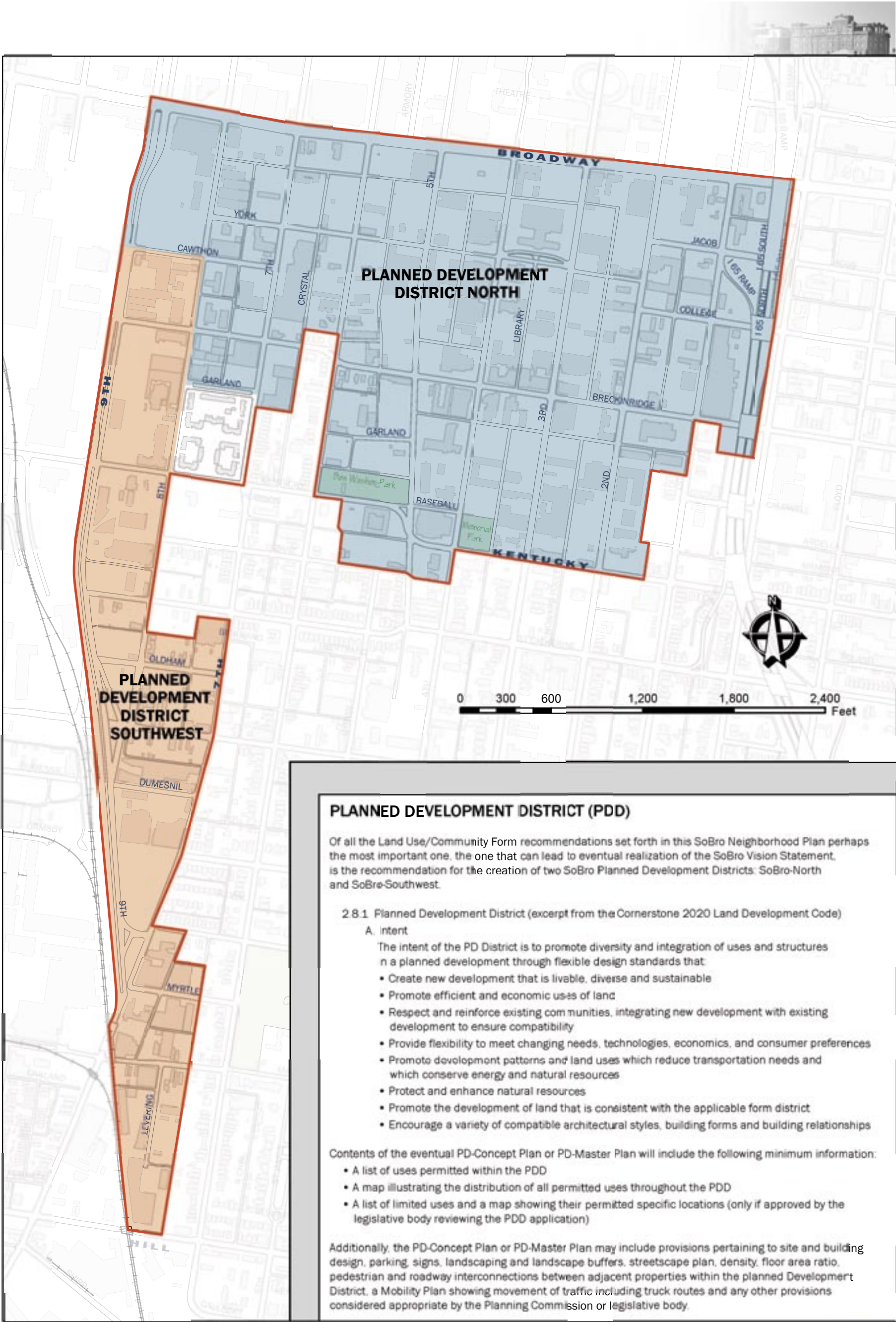


- Convene a Metro interdepartmental team to address opportunities for developing a green building incentive program.. Examples of possible incentives that offer water, stormwater, and energy rebates, fee reductions, preferential building permit review, and technical assistance to any development that uses United States Green Building Council's LEED certification.
- Following national models as a benchmark, establish a website that offers green building resources to help designers, builders, developers, business owners, and homeowners know about current knowledge of the practice and links to local resources.
- Partner with regional architecture and design schools, the Central Kentucky Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and any interested parties to develop a green housing and/or workplace design competition for a site within the Sobro neighborhood.
- Develop a policy that requires any newly constructed Metro-related facilities, Metro funded projects, and infrastructure projects be constructed, renovated, operated, maintained, and deconstructed using green building, low impact development (LID), waste management, and conservation landscaping principles and practices to fullest extent possible.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a green building fund and a policy of having site plan developers who do not commit to achieving a LEED rating contribute to the Fund. The fund would be used to provide education and outreach to developers and the community on green building issues.



SoBro: Proposed Expansion of Downtown Form District





SoBro: Proposed Planned Development Districts

